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ISRAEL AGAINST BENJAMIN.

A

SERMON FOR THE TIMES:

PREACHED IN THE

1st PRESB. CHURCH, DUBUQUE, IOWA,

BY

REV. A. A. E. TAYLOR, PASTOR.

PUBLISHED BY MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION.

DUBUQUE, IOWA:
UPHAM & GILMORE, PRINTERS, TIMES BOOK AND JOB ROOMS.
1861.

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PREACHED

SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 28,

AND REPEATED, BY REQUEST,

SABBATH EVENING, MAY 26, 1861.

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S E R M O N .

And the children of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until even, and asked counsel of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin, my brother? And the Lord said, Go up against him.—JUDGES, xx. 23.

THAT was an incalculably sad and solemn day in Israel, when word came of the transgression of Benjamin and its armed revolt against the nation.

A man of the tribe of Levi, with his concubine, came to Gibeah, a city of the tribe of Benjamin, to sojourn for the night. Certain riotous sons of Belial, learning of their presence, beset the house in which they lodged, and despite the earnest remonstrance and entreaty of the hospitable master of the house, persisted in the consummation of an infamous wrong to the stranger, and the aggravated murder of his companion. And when the wronged man sent his thrilling message through the other tribes, they were all assembled, and “Knit together as one man,” and sent messengers to the offending tribe, requiring that they should deliver up the authors of that iniquity to receive their just punishment. “But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel, but gathered themselves together to go out and battle against the children of Israel.” And when the other tribes were gathered before one of their cities, the Benjamites came forth and attacked, and defeated them. And then it is that the words of the text appear in the record, “And the children of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until even, and asked counsel of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin, my brother? And the Lord said, Go up against him.

I do not intend to endeavor to run an exact parallel between our national affairs to-day, and the circumstances of Benjamin’s revolt. The analogy is sufficiently accurate, however, to guide us to the method of attaining to our decision of christian duty, in our present fearful crisis.

A portion of the tribes of our Israel have assembled themselves to defend certain of their numbers who have committed great wrongs in the nation, who have instigated and even compelled others to revolt. Nearly all of Benjamin have bound themselves together, for the armed support of these authors of iniquity; and when the nation has appeared with its forces, for the maintenance of its national laws and justice, before one of their cities, they have come out and defeated its soldiers and have captured its fortress. And now the children of Israel being "Knit together as one man," for the support of their national existence and power, it is becoming in them, solemnly before Heaven, to consider and seek counsel of God, as to their duty in this emergency. And as one of the successors of those ministers of religion through whom Israel of old sought the will of God, I feel it to be my bounden duty to seek that counsel of God, and to bring it to you to-day.

I am aware that this is a time when ill-balanced and prejudiced minds may, more than ever, seek to accomplish their fanatical and wicked ends—when demagogues may strive to ride into favor upon the wings of popular excitement, and stir up the people to unchristian and revengeful deeds. But whilst our caution should thus be greater now than ever before, and we should look with more than usual calmness and deliberation before we speak and act—remembering that words are deeds and deeds are history—yet it is a time when all should boldly take their stand, and firmly maintain before the world, their honest convictions of duty. This is a time when our Christian principle should make us all the more steadfast and firm in civic duty. And the force of public opinion, in a patriotic and Christian community, should be such as to compel every one who stands in any position as a leader or public teacher, to make his opinions and the bearing of his influence known to all men, and that without even one solitary exception. For silence now is weakness to the cause, and he that is not for us, is against us.

I wish to speak with that moderation, forbearance, and sense of justice, to all our countrymen, which is becoming in a Christian man,—not to arouse to unholy feeling, but calmly to point out the duty of considerate, earnest, servants of God, and not to draw back from the duty myself, even though it be sorrowful and severe.

You know that while this was a matter of mere party discussion, and was bound up in local politics, I, as one of many, have felt that higher interests demanded my whole attention, and my entire labors, without exception, have been earnestly devoted to the immediate work of saving souls and of advancing the Christian life

in the hearts of my brethren. In those circumstances, I have felt, and still feel, that I was altogether right. Neither do I now deviate from my former opinions and principles. But this is a different hour. History, that sleeps in time of calm, has awaked and stalks fearfully on her broad way to-day. The times have changed, and duty necessarily changes to meet them. The interests threatened are no longer merely local and temporary, but the prosperity of the Church of God and of Christian liberty—the deepest interests the Christian heart can know—stands in the very centre of the question, as it now presents itself; just as the cause of God and right, was centered in the strife between Israel and Benjamin, in the days of which the text and context form the record. And professing to love that cause with all my heart, and placed here in the providence of God to work for it with all my might, I feel that it becomes my duty as a Christian Minister, (to say nothing of my duty as a patriot, which my religion can only strengthen,) to give the whole force of my personal and ministerial influence to the sacred cause of civil and religious freedom: as an Ambassador of God to seek His counsel and openly to declare it, whether men will hear or will forbear: both as a minister and as a man, as a Christian and as a citizen, to give the whole power of my thought, word and deed, to the support of the common cause of our country and of God, believing that the powers that be are ordained of God. I now know no party nor local influence; I only know that the nation is trembling with the shock of hostile blows, and I come instinctively to aid in its rescue.

But it will be said that we are the Ministers of the Prince of *Peace*. Even so. I recognize and embrace that truth with a joyful heart. But that does not imply that we are to preach peace at all hazards and upon every occasion, at the sacrifice of life, liberty and the enjoyment of religious freedom. That does not mean that we should not resist evil, even with the sword, when it raises its bristling front in our face; that we should permit ourselves to be destroyed, and the cause of Christ to be overwhelmed, because we must not take the sword in self-defence. If it be otherwise, then Israel was wrong, Luther was wrong, the brave old Covenanters of Scotland were wrong, our fathers who bought liberty with their shed blood were wrong, all law that requires punishment as a restraint against vice, is wrong; all entirely wrong. No, Hearers! christianity demands no cowardly sacrifice of our dearest rights and privileges, no base surrender of all that is noble and good,

for the sake of the mere *name* of *peace*, for then that word *peace*, would become but a synonym with slavery and infinite degradation. Peace consists not merely in the absence of war—you cannot have true peace when oppression rules and human rights are trampled upon—there will still be war in the heart and in the act, when the ability to war is attained; witness Poland and Hungary, long oppressed, but now like waking giants in the fresh morning's dawn. And if the Prince of Peace, according to prophecy, is to make war with the rebel host, surely for the preservation of the same truth, for the rescue of liberty and our dearest rights, when it comes at last to the stern necessity, we may war in the present for the establishment of future peace. War is often the only pathway to permanent peace, and sometimes the shortest road thereto.

I am no advocate of war as such. I abhor it from my inmost soul. Would to God that it might be banished forever from the face of the earth. I would be the last to inaugurate or wage war. For the final settlement of any question, I would gladly make any personal sacrifice that it were possible for me to make with the consent of my conscience, in duty to God and to those whom God has committed to my keeping. Above all, war amongst brethren, so unnatural, so awful, fills me with inexpressible grief, and I shrink from it as from the touch of the plague.

There are times, however, when we may not have permission to choose for ourselves, between war and honorable peace, but when we are forced to choose between war, on the one hand, and the loss of every high privilege and liberty, civil and religious, on the other; and then, of these two great evils, when I have to choose between them, and there is no escape, God forgive me if I am wrong, but I must accept of the sword. It appears that such a crisis has arisen at this time, and that between these two evils we are now compelled to make choice. I have invariably given my influence and my votes for those men and measures of compromise which I hoped would bring an honorable and lasting peace, even at the sacrifice of personal preferences and the longings of my heart for certain national conditions. I have prayed fervently and persistently for peace. I have nourished the thought of peace with most earnest desire, and as the sweet morsel in my heart. I have hoped for peace, hoping against fear, against sorrow, and even against hope itself. I have lived for years amongst the Southern people, and have fully sympathised with their supposed

wrongs, in so far as I have felt that they were wronged, by public feeling or opinion, through misunderstanding or fanaticism. Some of my dearest friends and kindred are with the Southern people to-day. It is the land of a portion of my ancestry, and for years was the beloved home of my choice. I love that home to-day; and who could help it? I love it all the more to-day, since I know that the noble State where I have lived, has refused to take part in this work of iniquitous rebellion, and because I am led to believe that she is loyal at heart, to the sacred cause.* I did not leave that home until called away by an indication of Providence, so plain that I could not resist it, when ordered by the Great Captain to this part of the field. I have hence thought, that I understood better than a vast majority of my friends here, the peculiar characteristics and modes of thought of that people, and have been better prepared to interpret and make allowances for them. And I have felt that they have misunderstood us, and that we have misunderstood them. I know that they have loved their country as do we, and that they would have been as ready to shed their blood for it as are we, had a foreign foe done us wrong. They have done so in past days. But they have been betrayed. We certainly ought to make all the allowances for them that we can, in consistence with our duty to our whole country. We ought to do this as Christians and as American citizens; as lovers of liberty, and as servants of God. And I not only believe that we are prepared to do it to the full, but that we have done it already.

I am farther sure that not one of us would be willing to wage war against them if that dire necessity could be averted. And the prevalent feeling among all classes, and especially among all Christians, this day, is that of Israel, when they went up and wept before the Lord. Sorrow fills every heart; deep, earnest, prostrating sorrow;—and if we may reverently repeat the words of our Savior's anguish, we are all ready to say, and have said,—“Lord, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” But I fear that it is not now possible, and that the will of the Lord must be done.

If it were possible to purchase peace to-day, with any price short of religious freedom and the truth of Jesus, I for one, would agree to pay that price, willingly, heartily, joyfully. But it appears that the day has passed, and that, in the words of a celebrated father and orator of liberty, “there is now no election for us;

* Kentucky.

the war is actually begun." It remains not for us to say what we would do, in a certain emergency; what we would have done had the matter been in our hands; what we would like to have done or what we could have wished to have been done; but what it is our duty *to do*, as matters now stand before us. In this emergency that is now upon us, what shall we do? Where shall we stand? And for myself, I am bold to say that I cannot see what any patriot, who will go weeping and sorrowing because of the sad necessity, in the spirit of true humility and self-distrust, and ask counsel of God, can be brought to feel it his duty to do, but to stand up boldly and heartily for our Country and our Government, established by the blood, consecrated by the prayers, and baptized in the tears of our sires—to uphold with all the powers that God has given him, our Constitution and Union, the seal and bond of our liberty and national existence.

There is a point however, indicated before, which we as Christians, ought ever to bear fervently in mind. We do not battle with the Southern people, as such. I have no enmity against the South. On the contrary, I love them as brethren—as a part of my countrymen. This is no war of roses—of parties contending for the mastery. Do not let it be North against South. We ought to love our whole country, and because one is Southern, we must not therefore, declare him an enemy. The nature of the contest forbids this. We battle not for the North, but for the Union and the Constitution—for the permanency of the nation. The contest is between our country and all who oppose it, wherever they may stand, wherever may be their birthplace or present residence.

I believe that the Southern people have been betrayed, have long since lost their liberty at home. Wise and honest men in their midst have so declared to me. Current events, for months past, have proved it. I blame the people in part. I blame their betrayers more. The people should not have permitted themselves to be betrayed of their liberty. Many of them have heroically defended it; many of them do so defend it to-day. Others would thus defend it did they dare, except at the price of life. But by deep laid schemes of unprincipled leaders, actuated by I fear to say what kind of motives, the people have been deliberately deceived, misinformed as to the intent of their Northern brethren, harangued, and excited by every possible means, by gross misrepresentations and traitorous deeds; dragged on, in many cases, unwilling, and their voice silenced, until at last, they have been

plunged into an armed contest, and so incited and compelled to the rebellious position in which they now stand, and from which the hand of terror will not let them draw back. And under these circumstances, they have come to think that their institutions and liberties are endangered, and firmly to believe, whilst they are taking arms for tyranny, that they are warring for their own rights.

Would that it were not too late to undeceive them. Would that they could be undeceived. But this is not permitted them by those who have obtained power over them. Being so deceived, I can, as a brother, pity them from the bottom of my heart; but what must I do *as a citizen*? Because they are blinded, because they have been betrayed and made to think that they are right, must we sit still, folding our arms, and allow our liberties to be crushed with theirs? Must we too, suffer our freedom to be wrested from our grasp? No! It cannot be. We cannot help their being deceived, and if they have been persuaded, or forced, to take part with those who aim alike at the destruction of their liberty and our own, upon them must fall the dread responsibility; but it becomes our duty to do all that lies in our power, with the help of God, not only to maintain our freedom, but to restore their liberty to them, even though we be compelled to do it with the edge of the sword and at the bayonet's point.

I firmly believe, from my soul, that the battle to-day is that of Liberty against Tyranny. We can see the dawn of this truth already; and if we fail then is liberty lost and freedom finds its hopeless grave. And if this Samson of Liberty shall be betrayed into the hands of his foes, and be made to grind sightless in the prison house, and be brought at last, into the temple of his enemies, there to make sport for them, he will indeed lay hold of the pillars of the temple, and bow himself to find his own destruction; but he will also, in that moment, carry with him in his fall, all those who have confederated against him and mocked at him in his woe.

I do not desire to injure the Southern people in thought, word, or deed. I want to give them every allowance of their just dues; and so do you. I do not wish them to lose one farthing of their just rights and privileges; neither do you. I would labor and strive, to secure and defend their liberty, just as I would to maintain my own; and so would every one of you.

But why not then, says one, have granted them their desires and permitted them to separate from us, as Lot from Abraham, in

peace. That would have been my desire, if, in the first place, they could have been permitted fairly to give such an expression of their untrammelled wishes in the matter, and if, secondly, they had endeavored to secure their separation as did Lot and Abraham, in a way which would not have been destructive alike to our liberties with their own. But they did not have the opportunity thus to express freely their wishes in the matter; and their doctrine of a forced Secession, upon which they are acting, is a fatal stab at all permanent government under a free constitution, a death blow at all forms of voluntary union of free and independent people. This is a selfish deed of theirs. They have not consulted our mutual interests at all. They have no right to burn their own house when that burning endangers ours. Peaceable separation I know, is far preferable to a forced union. That the latter could not co-exist with liberty, I firmly believe; and were it possible to-day, to forget all that has been done and is doing, and to separate from them in peace, without endangering the first fundamental principles of constitutional freedom, for myself, I would heartily agree to it and rejoice in the result.

If all hostilities should cease to-day, and they should come in a way that might be constitutional (and I would agree to make it so, for the sake of peace) and ask, of their own accord, to be separated, with a proper regard for mutual interests I would, even now, although they have so deeply wronged the government, accede to it, only so that our liberties be not infringed. And I see how no one can possibly go farther than this in their favor, and still preserve his honor and his faith. I am willing as a Christian man, to be as conciliatory as possible, and to yield as much as possible within the limits of uninjured liberty. But this does not appear possible to-day. They have chosen a different way and they must walk in it. They have arisen in armed hostility, determined to effect their separation by the sword, reckless as to the destruction of that government under which they were born and bred, and from which they would now escape. And they will have to learn that we have liberties to protect as well as they, and that if they will destroy their own freedom, they shall not, without a fearful struggle, with it also destroy ours. Liberty will not allow them to destroy our best and brightest interests, in the pursuit of their selfish purposes;—that would be unbounded license for them, but tyranny for us.

But it may be said, why not let them go out at once; you cannot subjugate them, nor in a free land, hold them as a conquered

province, under bondage. I reply, we do not desire to subjugate any one; we desire, if we could have our way, to know no bondage in our noble land; and after we shall have conquered the enemies of liberty, if God will so mercifully grant, we will then, I firmly believe, have no desire to do otherwise than to restore all the nation to that common freedom with ourselves, which it has hitherto enjoyed. We battle for *their* freedom to-day, as well as for our own. But we cannot let them go out in the way which they have chosen, because this would be a forced recognition of a principle which involves our national life and all its hopes. We cannot consent to bleed to death, as a body politic, because one hand may desire to sever from that body, in its own rough, unskillful way, the arm to which it is attached. Says an eloquent writer and theologian,* in treating upon this subject, "This is no mere question of the ascendancy of one section of the country or of another; of the triumph of one system of labor, or form of social life over another; but it is the question whether we are to continue to exist as a nation, or become a congeries of independent nations—whether our government shall remain as the Parthenon was, when Pericles left it, the admiration of the world, or become what the Parthenon now is, with scarcely one stone upon another. It is a question of national existence, whether we are, ever have been, or shall continue to be, a nation at all." At this national existence, the doctrine of those who now war against the government, is a death blow. "It is no abstraction. It is not merely an idea. It does not merely hurt the understanding and shock the common sense of men, to deny our national character. It affects our vital interests. It effects equally the rights and welfare of North and South." The doctrine of Secession, if admitted, throws the whole country into chaos; ignores at the outset, every constitutional remedy, and takes the law into its own hands; leaves no security of permanent national existence and peace; affords no stability of government to give firmness to trade, energy to business, and security to the title of property; upsets, at one fell blow, that whole glorious fabric of laws and agreements which form our national compact; drags the keystone of our national arch down from its proud place; makes us despicable in the eyes of other nations, and incapable of self-protection alike against foreign foes and the conflicting interests of our own internal forces; destroys law as such, by sapping its strength and leaving obedience thereto to the option

*Dr. Hodge, Princeton Review, April, 1861.

of the lawless; changes protection of life and property to a fleeting phantom, because it takes away the power of punishing crime, save by the vengeance of the wronged, in that it permits the offender to place himself at will, outside of the pale of government; impairs, in short, every national right of a free people; imperils every sacred interest of our homes, our families and our lives; and surrenders the reins of government to be battled for, between anarchy on the one hand and tyranny on the other. Its legitimate fruits may already be seen in the condition of those States where it holds present sway, with tyranny greater than that of the Grand Vizier, because more lawless and divided amongst more despotic hands. Nor is this all.

We have other interests still, at stake. If such a principle should triumph, where would be our boasted religious privileges; for history proves that these do ever go hand in hand with civil freedom. Where would be the sacred right to worship God according to the dictates of an untrammelled conscience, where these free temples of devotion, where the peaceful fireside altar, where the open Bible, when the ploughshare shall become the sword, as a necessity of self-protection against the thousand warring interests of all those divisions of States and communities, which would inevitably follow the recognition of this principle.

It cannot be. It is absurd upon its face. It is a desperate resort of iniquity. As well might I, an humble citizen, attempt to secede from this community, declare my independence of it, defy its laws, maltreat its officers of justice and freely wrong its citizens and ruin their property, whilst still maintaining my residence in it, as to recognize this odious principle. No! There is one resort open to every man, and therein consists his liberty—to reform laws if they appear oppressive; or, failing in that, to dispose of his property, or to carry it with him and go out personally from that community himself, but not to force out with him the property of others, or in its bosom to maintain an armed independence. This latter can never consist with true liberty. It is the first step of tyranny.

Says the Rev. Dr. Hodge, again, “Nothing can be more dear or sacred to a people than their national life. The destruction of the life of a nation, is a thousand times worse than suicide, for it is not merely self-destruction, but the destruction of posterity. In that life is bound up all their liberties and hopes. It is their very blood and breath. And no doctrine that impairs it, can be for a

moment entertained. And, hearers, we will not entertain it; we cannot afford to do it. We will not bring into our State, this wooden horse filled with that concealed host, which will burn our homes, carry desolation to all our possessions, death to our families and, at the best, slavery to ourselves. It cannot be. Better were it to die in its opposition, than be reduced to death in submission to it. We cannot admit such a doctrine, and with the help of God we *will* not. We recognize indeed the right of revolution, but we recognize also the right to suppress revolution, when the permanency of a good government is endangered thereby. That this is the best government the sun ever shone upon, may be proved even from late admissions of prominent leaders of Secession both political and clerical.* This government is so endangered to-day and we must maintain our liberties. We might consent to the loss of a member, even of several members, but not in such a manner as would bring upon us at once national death.

We owe this defence to those patriots, our fathers, who so dearly purchased our national liberty with their blood and established our national existence for themselves and for us, with their covenant oaths. We owe a duty to them. We must regard their sacred obligations. We must at all hazards maintain their legacy, our birthrights.

Neither is this liberty merely our own. We hold it also in trust for others. We must enjoy it while we may, but as we have received it from our fathers, so it must be transmitted to our descendants; and we must hand it down to them unimpaired. Ours would be everlasting shame, did that liberty and glorious nationality perish, in its passage through our hands. We cannot afford to prepare thus beforehand, lasting infamy for ourselves, and call down upon us the eternal execration of coming generations, the curses of those to whom we shall have left a legacy of bondage.

This, Brethren, is not the battle of a day. Upon the present decision of this question hang the interests of nations yet unborn—upon it rest the destinies of those who will hereafter look to us, for their place and power among the nations of the earth. Shall we give them the lot of anarchy or despotism; or shall we perish, if perish we must, in the effort to bequeath to them that holy heritage of liberty we have ourselves thus far enjoyed? Who can doubt the answer? Who can fail in this day of peril?

*See late speeches of A. H. Stevens of Georgia, and the Fast Day Sermon of Dr. J. H. Thornwell, of S. C.

We likewise guard this liberty to-day not only for ourselves, but for others of our own generation. To us the oppressed of every nation are now turning, with earnest, watchful gaze. Shall tyrants, as they press down the iron heel upon their necks point them to us, and bid them look to see the extinguishment in our hands, of all their hopes, and learn the lesson that immortal man, even under the most favorable circumstances, is incapable of self-government?

To us, many of the oppressed have already fled, as to an asylum of freedom. Shall we betray their trust and by our present action tell them that there is, and can be, no home of the free, no refuge from tyranny? To us as their polar star, nations in bondage are turning in hope. We are trying the experiment not merely for ourselves, but for the world.

To us, rejuvenated Italy, having found at last the Fountain of Youth, just rising by main strength and the help of God, into the new day of prospective liberty, now anxiously looks, in the result of our present crisis, to read her own future destiny. Shall we tell her that liberty is a phantom, and freedom an impossibility, and bid her desist in her holy struggle and bow her neck to the galling yoke at once? Shall we tell her, that her Garibaldi shall tremble but for a moment on the pinnacle of immortal fame, only to sink with our own great Washington, to the grave of disappointment and oblivion, as the fanciful pursuer of an unattainable possession, as the hero of a bubble which will burst? No. Ten thousand times, No. It cannot be. By the help of God, it shall not be. We will still be free. We will still stand with open arms, to welcome the oppressed of every nation to our hospitable shores and liberty shall still smile in their embrace. We will tell the world that liberty is eternal, and give to Poland, Hungary and Italy, and all the enslaved everywhere, an assurance of complete, joyful success, which shall fill with new fire their hearts. We will transmit, defended with our blood, that sacred boon which our fathers bought with theirs, to the everlasting gratitude of posterity, who, by that double example incited, will never dare to betray it; and thus, in our hands and theirs, that goddess of the free shall become immortal.

If forty centuries, looking down from the Egyptian pyramids upon the soldiers of Bonaparte, nerved their arms for unholy conquest, how ought the thought that liberty is looking down upon us to-day from her *eternal* mountain, strengthen our hearts and hands for the defence of her holy cause. We owe this defence to every

principle of right and duty—to the past, to the present, to the future and to God.

We owe it to the cause of Christ. It is His cause that I plead here to-day. That cause in its progress and existence is fearfully endangered. God has wonderfully recognized our liberty as his own gift, and the outworking of his own heavenly laws in our midst. Never since time began, does history show that any nation, not even excepting God's own chosen people, has been more blessed of Him, in national prosperity and honor.—Never has the cause of Christ more rapidly and steadfastly and certainly advanced. Never has prayer been more abundantly answered—never have hearts been more inclined to pray and serve God. Never have so many and efficient instrumentalities been devised and kept in work, for the advancement of the glory of God. Science, Art, Civilization, Refinement and Religion have made giant strides, whilst our banner has defiantly floated on, across the continent from ocean to ocean, and has everywhere brought tears of joy to the eyes of those thirsting for freedom, in every foreign land and on every sea; alike sheltering the refugee from despotism, and with the wings of commerce bearing food and raiment to the suffering and the poor.

This liberty is evidently the gift of God. Its betrayal would be a terrific blow to the cause of righteousness the earth over, for it seems that tyrants are almost everywhere else than here, and Christianity cannot flourish under the tyrant's sway.

We are the beacon light of Christianity for the world. Shall that light be at once extinguished, and the many vessels freighted with precious, immortal hopes, be left at sea, to drive before adverse winds in the dark night upon hostile shores, or to strand upon undiscovered reefs? No! it must not be. We owe it to the cause of Christ to see to it, that it shall not be. He has said, "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." And it is our solemn duty for His sake to "stand fast therefore in that liberty wherewith Christ maketh us free."

I believe that God's hand is in this storm. I am assured that it will be His voice alone, that will at last speak peace to the angry waves. I have no fears as to the final result. I hope for a speedy consummation. God is with us, as he was with our fathers. I trust that this is the preparation for better times. I know not but it is a harbinger of millennial days. I believe that these are some of those "all things" which shall "work together for good, to

them that love God." We see now as through a glass darkly, but we shall soon see face to face. Now we walk by faith, and not by sight. Now it is the night, but soon the morning will dawn; and I pray God it be the morning of that day of the Prince of Peace, who shall receive the kingdoms of the world for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, whose dominion shall extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.

But whatever may be God's purpose for the future, we live in the present, and our duty lies here. It becomes each one of us to look the matter squarely in the face and seek counsel of God as to this duty. I have endeavored so to do. The result is, that I am impelled to the most painful duty of my life. I would shrink back from the conclusion if I dared. I have endeavored to imitate the children of Israel, and go mourning before the Lord, to ask counsel of Him. I have reached a decision. It has been in no moment of feverish excitement. It costs greater sacrifices from me than from many. It has been against the prejudices of all my past life. It has been at the sundering of some of the tenderest cords of friendship. It clashes with all the fond memories of a sainted mother's home and ardent affection. But how can I hesitate and still love my country? I can attain to no other decision. My duty to my country and her flag is before all others, when her existence, with all that it involves, is at stake. Liberty calls me and I come. Blessed Liberty! gift of God sent down to man as a foretaste of that eternal freedom promised to His children, I bow before thee to-day. On thy shrine I lay my heart; to thee I bring the consecration of my life's highest purposes and aim. I am thine, entirely thine. Accept, I pray, the feeble gift.

And, Brethren, what else can you do? Our Southern friends may have been wronged in our thoughts, but not I verily believe, in a single act or intention. They had a right to have their wrongs righted. But in doing this, no right of Secession or revolution, or by whatever name it may be called, which ignores our equal rights, could bring to them the duty or liberty of forcing this other tremendous wrong upon us, and our common national mother. Now, *we* have been wronged; for liberty has been threatened and attacked, and her banner dishonored by its own sons. This is a wrong to us, beside which all their supposititious wrongs sink into infinite littleness. They have no right to force us to the surrender of our common liberty and by the grace of God they

shall not do it. Let us pray against that dire result. Let us work against it. If needs be let us take up the sword of the Lord to prevent it. Not for vengeance; no, not to shed one single drop of blood more than is absolutely required to reinstate that trembling statue of freedom upon its firm, immovable pedestal.— But to do all that; to make liberty as guaranteed by the Constitution, as firm as the granite hills and as enduring.

In the present crisis the counsel of the Lord seems to be found as we ask with tears, “Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin, my brother,” in the solemn answer of the text “Go up against him.” And then, when they who have wrought this evil shall have met their just retribution, and the national laws and prestige shall have been re-established, then, as Israel unto Benjamin, so will we restore to our brethren, their forfeited privileges and endeavor as brethren still, to assist them by every means in our power, to re-attain their former rights and position. But to-day the nation demands our support. We must *first* render our liberties secure.

We must stand by the flag of our country, for it is the emblem of all that was precious to our sires, all that is holy and dear to ourselves, and all the hopes of children’s children. Upon that flag is perched our destinies. There either joyously waves the victory of liberty and right, or mournfully droops at half-mast, the defeat of man’s brightest hopes and of the means of his loftiest eternal attainments.

When our sires gave us that flag, it was as no empty show, nor merely as a token, by which we might be distinguished from other nations. It was so framed that it might speak to us always, and going with us, in every circumstance and under every condition of life, constantly be a sacred reminder of the price of our liberty and God’s recognition of it as a righteous liberty. It was blazoned with no birds, nor beasts, nor creeping things. Neither the lion, nor the eagle, nor the serpent was there. They caught up an immaculate banner of “pure, celestial white,” which told of the unspotted chastity of the liberty they sought, and across its ample folds they laid the deeply dyed stripes of that red blood, by which this liberty was so dearly attained, to tell us at once its purity and its price. Then they put forth their hands, and caught from the skies above them, a section of the blue of heaven with the stars already fixed in their places there, and set it in that banner’s highest fold, to tell us that our government is a part of the handiwork

of God, and that as the stars are fixed by His hand, in the heavens, so are these States set in their places, in the etherial blue of our national sky—that there they may revolve in their appointed orbits, but that they may not rush madly from their tracks, to bring destruction upon themselves and confusion to others. And as star after star has arisen from time to time above our horizon, the morning stars have sung together at the goodness of God to them. Shall these stripes of ancestral blood be blotted out and that white be changed to black? Shall darkness overtake our sky and the stars be torn from their orbits there, only to leave for us as a nation instead, a bleak, desolate, eternal night? It remains for us to answer.

No! Brethren; that banner is the emblem of our liberties. It gives us national light and life. As such an emblem and speaking such destinies, my countrymen, Lovers of Freedom, give that flag your heart; give it your constant prayers; give it your unfailing strength; if need be give it your life. It will not be a life lost to the world. Pray for the peace of the land, but only peace in victory and the maintenance of eternal liberty. In the name of the Lord that victory shall be attained. And as it is now in our hearts to purpose, and resolve, and dare, so let it be to the end, without wavering and without fear.

O! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved homes, and the war's desolation!
Blest with victory and peace, may the heaven-rescued land
Praise the power that hath made and *preserved* us a nation.
Then conquer we must, for our cause it is just;
And this be our motto—"In God is our trust"—
And the star-spangled banner in triumph *shall* wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

So help us King of Kings and Lord of Hosts.



